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The Army's EO Program and Policies



Lesson 24: Religious Accommodations

Overview

- Define Army policy on Religious Accommodations
- Define Religious Discrimination
- Discuss nine elements of Religious Discrimination
- Identify four categories of Religious practices that can conflict with military duties
- Explain the procedures for requesting Religious accommodations
- Discuss commanders actions on request for Religious accommodations



Army Policy on Religious Accommodations

It is the Army's policy to approve request for accommodation of religious practices when they will not have an adverse impact on readiness, unit cohesion, health, safety, discipline or otherwise interfere with the soldier's military duties.



Religious Discrimination

Any action, intended or unintended, that unlawfully or unjustly results in unequal treatment of a person or groups based on religion and for which distinctions are not rational considerations.



Elements of Religious Discrimination

- Discounting beliefs of others
 - That's not really a religion
- Religious jokes/slurs
 - Bible Thumper, Jewing them down, Holy Roller
- Compulsory Services/Ceremony
- Exclusionary Prayer
 - In Jesus name, the accepted term is Lord



Elements of Religious Discrimination

- Stereotyping people by their religion
 - **We know about those Catholics and those Mormons....**
- Non-Association due to religion
 - **People with common interests group together, Unit cohesion problem???**
- Failure to provide an alternative service
- Lack of concern
 - **Small denominations often overlooked**



Religious Practices that Conflict with Military Duties

- Worship Practices
 - These will be accommodated except when precluded to military necessity
- Dietary Practices
 - Exception to policy to ration separately
- Medical Practices
 - Belief in self-care, a soldier may request accommodation for non-emergency, non-life threatening illness or injury



Religious Practices that Conflict with Military Duties

- Wear and appearance of the uniform
 - Religious items may be worn in uniform if neat, conservative and discreet, jewelry, headgear outlined in AR 670-1
 - PT uniforms can present a particular problem, modesty, standards of dress
- Personal Grooming
 - Does not accommodate exceptions to personal grooming except provisions granted prior to 1986, unshorn hair and beard or permanent jewelry



Request for Accommodation

- Uniform and personal grooming requests not entertained governed by AR 670-1
- Commanders must respond within 10 working days formally or informal
- Formal- must be in writing, stays in effect until revoked by new command
- Disapproved requests may be appealed goes through each level of command to ODCSPER in DA
- If approved along the line then the approved request goes back to the soldier
- If soldier request is denied they request separation under provisions of AR 635-200, officers under AR 635-100



Commander's Requirements

- The Army places high value on religious beliefs
- Request is sincere and religion bases
- If the accommodation will have an adverse impact on military readiness, unit cohesion, standards, health, safety, or discipline



Commander's Requirements

- Importance of accommodating the individual
- Impact of similar request
- Alternatives
- Previous treatment of similar requests



Summary

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